

Chapter 16

A Model for Social Entrepreneurship Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter reviews the factors that are relevant to promote an entrepreneurial attitude, identifying education as an element of vital importance that influences the disposition to start a venture and its results. This is particularly important in the case of social entrepreneurship projects, in which good intentions frequently overcome sound business realities. To deepen the understanding of the relationship between education and social entrepreneurship, the authors develop the model “Pyramid of catalysts for entrepreneurship” which helps to understand the mechanism by which the educational process affects the quantity and quality of social entrepreneurship. This chapter also presents several elements of paramount importance in designing a program of social entrepreneurial education.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a broad consensus in identifying entrepreneurial activity as an element of vital importance for economic and social development of a country. This activity has become even more relevant in recent years, identified as an essential mechanism of generation of wealth, which in turn allows the improvement of the employment rate.

The same is true of social entrepreneurship. However, here the emphasis goes towards the social valued generated by those entrepreneurs and their role in opening new pathways to solve large scale problems effecting social change, frequently for the benefit of the marginalized and disadvantaged.

The existing literature on entrepreneurship, reviews various factors that help develop and enhance this activity: aspects such as the availability of financial resources, the provision of physical infrastructure, the economic, administrative, and regulatory environment and others. However, among the designated

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factors, one recurrently appears, as of particular importance; in fact, there is consensus that the education received play a decisive role in the predisposition to undertake.

It is possible that the large number of people, who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities, possess innate abilities that will enable them to face the complexities, institutional as well as relational, of the world. However, there is only a way to strengthen those capacities, both for those who already have them and also to cover the gaps and develop a predisposition to entrepreneurship in people who do not have such knowledge and skills. This mechanism is through education.

The role of education in fostering the capabilities of the social entrepreneur and the impact of the projects undertaken is as important, if not more still. The reason being that in addition to all the skills and abilities that foster the success of the usual entrepreneur, the social kind requires an added measure of leadership. The requirement comes from the need to be able to endure the hardships of moving people and institutions out of their regular paths, and induce them to toddle new roads of action, setting up correspondingly new institutions. That rearranging of the existing reality is the usual outcome of the most successful social entrepreneurship projects and this kind of transformation is difficult to achieve without an enhanced leadership capability.

There seems to be some correlation between the education level and the rate of entrepreneurship, and there are indications that higher education is more likely to lead to a higher level of entrepreneurship, (2012 GEM, GEM Special Report, 2008, High Impact Entrepreneurship Global Report, 2011). However, there seems to be a major gap in this field of study. A large majority of existing studies treat this relationship between education and entrepreneurship in a generic way, without identifying and studying the precise way in which education can influence the predisposition of those that receive it to become entrepreneurs. Much less have been treated the special educational need of social entrepreneurs and their relationship to those of entrepreneurs at large.

Whether, for example, different training levels can impact on the quality of the entrepreneurship projects; if current educational systems, and its contents, are giving an adequate response to the needs of the potential entrepreneurs; or in depth analysis of the mechanism by which education and training positively influence entrepreneurship. All these can help us to respond to such issues as the following:

- Are the entrepreneurs who demonstrate a higher level of education and qualification those that undertake projects more attractive and with more value generation?
- Are those entrepreneurs showing a higher level of training and qualification, the ones that have a greater likelihood of success in the ventures they start?
- Which is the most useful syllabus for the people who receive training aimed at the setting up and management of business projects?
- How do education and training impacts the entrepreneurial initiative?

As Moliterno and Playhart (2011), page. Three have remarked, *Human capital theory predicts that individuals or groups who have higher levels of knowledge, skills and other competencies will achieve greater performance results than those who possess lower levels.* This chapter delve into the relationship between education and entrepreneurship, both social and market-oriented, developing a model that allows a more complete view of the inner workings of their interrelationship.

Inasmuch as we think that education plays as large a role in the scope and success of social entrepreneurship as it does in the usual kind of entrepreneurship, all of the considerations on entrepreneurship and education apply as well to social entrepreneurship. Thus, we will not keep repeating the pertinence

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